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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a school-oriented teacher education program at the Institute of Education, University of Utrecht (Netherlands). The program prepares teachers for the upper level of secondary education in a one-year post-graduate course that follows a four-year subject matter masters program. Because half of the one-year course is school-based, an intensive partnership is required between the university and the school. There is also need for careful consideration of the relationship between theory and practice and close collaboration between teacher educators and cooperating teachers. This collaboration is based on research into the gap between theory and practice, resulting in a structured approach to the student teachers learning processes that encourages reflection on practice. The preservice year is designed to integrate these experiences. The preservice teacher spends 250 hours in the classroom, including a minimum of 120 hours of instruction by the preservice teacher. The year is divided into the following periods: introduction (2 weeks), triad teaching practice (14 weeks), reorientation (10 weeks), individual and independent final teaching (14 weeks), and concluding phase (3 weeks). (Contains 42 references.) (JLS)

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PARTNERSHIP AND COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TEACHER EDUCATION INSTITUTE AND THE SCHOOLS: A PRECONDITION FOR STRUCTURED LEARNING FROM PRACTICE IN SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMMES

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Abstract

The current trend towards more school-based teacher education programmes requires careful consideration of the relationship between theory and practice and an intensive partnership between the teacher education institute and the schools.
This contribution describes the ways close collaboration between teacher educators and cooperative teachers is set up at Utrecht University in the Netherlands. It is based on research into the gap between theory and practice, resulting in a structured approach of the student teachers' learning process as a process of learning by reflecting on practice. Consequences for the institute-school partnership are analyzed and concern:

1. Equivalence in the relationship between the partners.
2. Frequent contacts between the partners and joint decision making processes.
3. The organisation, content and structure of programme elements, both at university and in the teaching practice component.
4. The choice of practicum sites.
5. Training of the cooperating teachers in supervision skills, aiming at the promotion of reflection.
6. Rewards for both teacher educators and cooperating teachers in terms of their professional lives.

1. Introduction

This contribution describes Dutch experiences with a school-oriented university teacher education programme at IVLOS, Institute of Education, in the light of the school-university partnership involved. The programme prepares teachers for the upper level of secondary education (grade 10-12)[1] in a one-year post-graduate course following a four years subject matter masters programme. The masters programme includes a two-month orientation on teaching. Half of the one-year course is by government rules required to be in the school. An intensive partnership between Utrecht University and schools has evolved and this is confirmed through formal contracts.

Three types of contracts are established. First, at the level of the school board and the university a multi-year agreement of cooperation on student teaching is signed. This agreement includes the schools' committment to take in student teachers and to provide supervision and the university's

[1] The graduates are also qualified to teach other grades in secondary schools.

obligation to pay the school for that work. Second, for each student teacher contracts are signed between the IVLOS, the school and the individual student teacher describing the tasks and responsibilities of the cooperating teacher and university supervisor, legal liability issues, the ethical and behavioral code for the student teacher and a procedure for cases of disagreement. Finally, at the start of a student teaching period the cooperating teacher, student teacher and university supervisor agree on a plan of action for the goals and procedures of that period.

The most important characteristic of the programme is its commitment to develop theory from practice, i.e. to base the university component strongly on the school component. Therefore this paper first considers the gap between theory and practice in teacher education (section 2) before entering into a description of the premises of the programme (section 3) and the considerations that follow from our choice for an emphasis on learning from practice (section 4). Then the overall organization of the curriculum (section 5) and a structure for the programme elements (section 6) are presented. We finally present some details of research about the programme (section 7) and conclude by explaining in section 8 the most salient features of the partnership between the schools and the university.

2. The gap between theory and practice

Hoy & Woolfolk (1989) describe different views on the function of (scientific) theory in teacher education. In short, they think that treatment of theories can be used:

- to identify specific teacher behaviour to aim for;
- to provide insight into the scientific nature of theory and the systematic process of inquiry;
- to activate student teachers' considerations about classroom processes and to introduce changes in their practical reasoning about education;
- as a source for alternative explanations, suggestions, concepts and eye-openers in thinking about educational problems and schools as learning environments.

Despite these potential benefits of theory for teacher practice many studies in the last fifteen years have demonstrated that there is a poor transfer of theory taught and skills trained on campus to classroom teaching practice (e.g. Sanders & McPeck, 1976; Lasley, 1980; Kagan, 1992a). Many student teachers confronted with the classroom responsibilities and complexities perceive the transition from the teacher education institute to teaching as a novice classroom teacher as an emotional disturbing period, that involves severe stress and difficult problems and washing out more progressive attitudes acquired during teacher education (cf. Muller-Fohrbrodt, 1978; Corcoran, 1981; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981; Veenman, 1984). With these problems in mind many strategies have been proposed to integrate theoretical and practical components in teacher education productively. For example recently long student teaching periods or early entrance into the field have been proposed. The alternative schemes in which novice teachers go to teach in schools with very little theoretical preparation are not only supposed to be an answer to teacher shortages but sometimes also to the criticisms on the relevance of teacher education theory for practice (e.g. Sandlin, Young & Karge, 1992). Such an approach to teacher education does, however, not guarantee success. In fact it has been shown that long student teaching periods can be a socializing factor rather than that they give an opportunity for professional development (cf. Wideen, Mayer-Smith & Moon, 1993).

Elsewhere we have discussed several hypotheses about the origins of the gap between theory or skills taught in teacher education and the teacher's actions in teaching practice (Wubbels, 1992). We feel that the most important origin may be the failure of the teacher education programs to address to a sufficient degree the conceptions that student teachers bring to the program. According to a constructivist perspective humans actively construct understanding from experiences using their already existing mental frameworks, and so they continuously build their

personal theories (Magoon, 1977; Resnick, 1983; Duffy & Jonassen, 1992). Student teachers enter teacher education with knowledge, attitudes and beliefs about teaching, deeply rooted in many years of experiences (Lorti, 1975; Wahl et al, 1984; Clark, 1988; Kagan, 1992; Stofflett & Stoddart, 1994). Stereotyped examples of teaching shown by film and television programs may contribute to the apparent stability of student teachers' conceptions of teaching (Lasley, 1980).

Student teachers' preconceptions include according to Korthagen (1993) both conscious aspects such as cognitions and aspects that can be considered as often more unconscious: images or gestalts. The term gestalt refers to conglomerates of needs, values, meanings, preferences, feelings and intentions for actions united into one inseparable whole (cf. Kagan, 1992b; Pajares, 1992; Wubbels, 1992; Korthagen, 1993). We feel that teacher education programs often have a certain one-sidedness in focusing on the rational, logical or analytical type of human information processing, neglecting another type, namely the - in every day teaching quite common - non-rational, intuitive or holistic type of information processing. Therefore, in addition to analytical approaches also interventions addressing non-rational information processing should be used to facilitate student teachers' adoption of new theories.

The teacher education programme that we describe here, actively tries and develops prospective teachers' preconceptions towards a personal professional theory of acting in practice taking into account this more holistic view of preconceptions and human information processing, in which preconceptions, scientific theory and action have been integrated in a productive way.

3. Premises of the programme

The programme has been developed in close collaboration with the schools with which IVLOS cooperates. In this section we describe the premises of the programme, that is the professional competencies the programme prepares student teachers for, the approach to teacher education as a process of learning from experiences and our view on the role of theory.

Professional competencies

The IVLOS programme trains student teachers for three types of professional competencies: starting competence, growth potential and research skills.

Being a programme for initial professional training its first concern is with the acquisition of professional basic skills (*starting competence*). The graduates are supposed to be able to start teaching independently and have to be competent in every one of four areas: teaching tasks, counselling tasks, (curriculum) development tasks and organizational tasks. The teacher is member of a school organization. Therefore student teachers also have to participate in activities outside the classroom.

After the completion of the initial training the teachers have to be able to develop independently their professional competence (*growth competence*). The teachers' ability to subject their actions to critical inspection in order to improve these, is an important aspect of growth potential.

The graduates must be able to study practical problems systematically by gathering, analyzing and interpreting data or through literature study (*research competence*). The research skills needed require a research attitude: the disposition to draw one's own conclusions based on systematic observations and analysis, rather than to assimilate prevailing opinions and attributions a priori.

In defining these aims the programme tries and prepares student teachers not only for the professional practice of today, but also for the future. The programme's multiple goals include stimulating reflection by student teachers (reflection as a tool for self-directed professional

development), promoting the independence of student teachers and helping them to acquire general professional and technical teacher competency, as well as to develop a personal teaching style (cf. Vonk, 1993; Hoy & Woolfolk, 1989).

Experiential learning

We think that starting from practical experiences can be a viable avenue in teacher education to help integrate theoretical notions with student teachers pre-conceptions and in teacher actions. This process of experiential learning needs careful planning, structuring, and supervision[2] to make practical experiences indeed learning experiences. Experiences can be connected to each other via the cyclical process of reflection described by Korthagen (1985):

He distinguishes five steps in the ALACT model: (1) Action, (2) Looking back on the action, (3) Awareness of essential aspects, (4) Creating alternative methods of action, and (5) Trial, which is a new action and therefore a starting point of a new cycle. By improving actions again and again the cyclical process becomes a spiral process of actions of ever higher quality. To help stimulate long term learning processes student teachers can for example use logbooks or diaries to document their strengths and weaknesses and consequently think about their wishes and aims (cf. Stones, 1992). Guidelines for student teachers may include to formulate learning questions, to draw up plans of action taking into account previous learning experiences, to collect data related to those learning questions or problems, and to reflect on the information collected in relation to one or more of the theories encountered on campus.

The role of theory

The IVLOS teacher education programme considers learning from practice and input of existing theory as complementary. On the level of programme organization therefore campus and school periods alternate and the campus periods function as opportunities to reflect on school experiences and deepen insights as well to prepare for new experiences. Thus the feed-forward problem (the students' openness for theory only after they have encountered practical experiences (Katz et al., 1981)) is addressed.

In order to prepare student teachers for school experiences theoretical notions can be used to introduce frameworks for analysis and to structure experiences. After school experiences theory supports student teachers' development by addressing questions and problems they have encountered in their field experiences and introducing theory accordingly. Student teaching experiences invite many questions such as "In my school there is a fear reduction program; but how can I see if a pupil needs such a program, are there instruments for observation available?

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[2] We use the words supervision and mentoring as synonims. It refers for us to all activities to help student teachers or novice teachers to learn from their experiences. They do not refer to evaluation for licensing or graduation nor to activities to guarantee the quality of the (student) teacher's teaching.

What should I as a biology teacher do?" or "How do I have to cope with ethical issues in the classroom? or" How can I improve pupil motivation?"

This approach means that the educator cannot plan the programme completely beforehand, although the experience of teacher educators will of course make the need for certain theories as a result of certain types of experiences and questions predictable. For example, experiences with classroom teaching at the beginning of the programme almost always elicits questions concerning 'survival' and 'classroom discipline'.

In this approach theory supports the process of experiential learning in stead of functioning as prescription for practice. Theories are used as points of view for (pre)structuring and analyzing field experiences in student teaching, setting up hypotheses and inter-relating experiences. In such an approach theories are presented as time and context connected generalizations. It is our experience that this approach evokes less resistance from student teachers than one that presents theories as prescriptive rules and that they learn to use theories critically (cf. Clift & Warner, 1986; Hoy & Woolfolk, 1989).

4. Programmatic considerations

At the level of the programme organization there are some important considerations that follow from our choice for an experiential programme. They concern integration of different aspects of traditional programmes, the balance between safety and challenge and the creation of individual learning paths.

Integrated competence acquisition
The IVLOS programme strives to enable student teachers to acquire the basic abilities and improve on them by offering an integrated curriculum. Integration of theory and practice implies other types of integration: integration of the disciplines of education, teaching methodology and subject matter presentation. Usually teacher education programs are structured according to disciplines such as educational psychology, foundations of education, teaching methods, or linguistics. Such a structure can promote compartmentalization of what is learned and may inhibit student teachers to integrate insights from different disciplines for the solution of practical problems. Certainly it cannot be followed if one wants to start from student teachers' experiences because these cannot be structured according to disciplines. Taking the experiences of student teachers as starting points for the programme means to integrate different disciplines and this is predominantly but not exclusively the case in the IVLOS programme.

For example, the teacher educator tries and shows the student teacher that there are general educational theories and principles that apply to different teaching-learning situations and that these can be of help in a specific context of a lesson in a particular subject. Conversely, he or she can point out the relation with general aspects of learning and teaching on the basis of, for example, an analysis of how pupils learn concepts and methods in a particular school subject. Consequently, the teacher educator, who teaches a class with student teachers with various subjects addresses cross-curricular topics.

Although the status of the University Teacher Education Programme as a postgraduate component of university education prohibits any extensive treatment of subject matter, the programme aims at the integration of subject matter content and the teaching methodology of a particular subject. Two questions are in particular important for the teacher's vocational preparation: Does the teacher-to-be have sufficient subject knowledge or are there any gaps that need to be filled in? How should the subject knowledge be translated to the pupils' level?

The integration of diverse elements in the programme has led to the decision that one staff member is responsible for the complete learning path of a cohort group of about 15 student teachers. This staff member teaches the majority of the programme for the cohort group but will every now and then invite experts from different disciplines as guest teachers. This programme organization asks for very experienced teacher educators who are knowledgeable in every discipline that contributes to the quality of teacher education and have the flexibility to introduce theory whenever appropriate. Therefore, the IVLOS Institute of Education has a lot of professional development activities for the staff provided by experts in the disciplines both from inside the institute and from outside (e.g. the school of social sciences). Most of the teacher educators who take responsibility for a cohort group of student teachers have their background in the field of education of the subject of the majority of the student teachers in the group.

Balance between safety and challenge

A safe climate is necessary for learning from experiences. At the same time there must be enough challenge and reality in the field experiences to let these be a good starting point of learning. Experiences should be offered in such a way that there is a balance between safety and challenge.

Learning from experiences in a cyclical process of reflection is not a way of learning that many students have encountered in school or university before they entered teacher education. Therefore, they may feel unsafe and show resistance to engage in such a learning process (Korthagen, 1988). An important condition for professional development as a process of (personal) growth is however a feeling of safety at the part of the student teacher (Maslow, 1968; Fullan, 1991). Teacher educator's empathy and rich repertoire can help to create a safe environment. Moreover a strategy of gradualness (Cronin, 1983; Waxman & Walberg, 1986) contributes to a relatively safe learning climate and may help to get student teachers acquainted to actively and consciously learning from their experiences. We write 'relatively safe' because student teaching periods are in general experienced as complex, intensive and emotional. The programme strives to construct an educational route that leads to a gradual acquisition of professional competence. This means that complexity, workload, independence and job responsibility gradually increase. This is evident in, among other things, school practice periods that increase in length and degree of complexity: first observing and teaching with individual pupils (the so-called one-to-one lessons), then teaching parts of lessons, whole lessons, a short series of lessons, a long series of lessons, and finally a complete series of lessons at which neither fellow-students nor the school supervisor are present and finished with a test for the pupils. This illustrates that an approach based on learning from experiences does not imply that the student teachers are 'immersed' in classroom teaching right from the start. Learning from experiences can only be effective if the teaching experience is not too complex or threatening. Otherwise concerns for survival wash out any systematic reflection.

At the end of the period of gradual immersion there is in the IVLOS programme a phase in which student teaching is made as realistic as possible (Koetsier, 1991). In the independent final teaching period (see section 6) the student teachers assume responsibility for the education in a small number of classes, term grades included, as completely as possible. The cooperating teacher who gives his classes to the student teacher supports this student teacher by means of 'long-arm' supervision, i.e. without attending the lessons. Formally, this cooperating teacher bears the ultimate responsibility for the student teachers work.

Long-term individual development

A third consideration is that experiences should be planned as a part of a long term development process. It is important that experiences are not separate, haphazard experiences, but that they are deliberately planned to be connected to each other for every individual student teacher. Every student teacher's individual development is different from any other's. On the one hand, the programme tries to stimulate student teachers to acquire the basic skills described above, but on

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the other it gives them enough room to develop personal styles in the way they practise the profession. Every student teacher will follow his or her own individual and highly personal learning path. This is necessary consequence of the idiosyncratic character of student teachers' preconceptions, and of the competencies that they bring to the programme. The goals of our programme have therefore many individual elements for student teachers: there are many different ways of good teaching and therefore student teachers are stimulated to develop their own style in accordance with their personality, competencies and biography.

Additionally, for this to be possible there is room for choice in the contents of components of the programme and in the way to learn. One of the ways in which the teacher training programme provides this choice is by offering different in-depth workshops. Also, the teacher model supplies many ways of monitoring the individual student teachers' educational route carefully and offering a helping hand, adapted to every student teacher's personal needs ('supervision of student teachers is tailor-made').

5. A structure for programme elements

In the programme teacher educators use a five phase procedure to structure student teachers' learning from experience in separate elements of teacher education programs (Hermans, Créton & Korthagen, 1993). We will discuss here this procedure focusing on activities that are not directly connected to student teachers' actual classroom teaching.

Pre-structuring through assignments
In this phase student teachers get assignments that pre-structure the experiences that they will acquire in class at the institute or in student teaching practice. For example in dealing with motivation the first assignment can be to try and map the motivation of pupils via an interview with one or more pupils. For the theme 'tests', experiences can be pre-structured by having student teachers plan a test to check homework, administer the test, and bring the results back to the institute.

Experiences
Secondly prospective teachers go to the student teaching school. They teach, interview, administer a test etc. It can be necessary to prepare these experiences by training of skills on campus. On the level of a class on campus the experience can be in a role play, a group discussion etc. For the theme 'questioning', for example student teachers can be asked to conduct a seven minutes interview with a colleague on what they want to learn in the seminar. It wil be clear that this phase can only be effective if the schools, in particular the cooperating teachers, support the assignments the student teachers get, and that they understand their goal. The cooperating teachers should, for example, leave the student teachers sufficient opprtunities for making mistakes, thus developing concerns and problems that form the basis for the next phase.

Structuring
Experiences are reported so that they can be structured by among others clarification, classification and generalization. Such a report, for example can take the form of an open, lengthy presentation in much detail with the help of video recording, or just a five minutes talk on the basis of closed questions of the teacher educator.
In this phase a first theoretical input can be seen. In the case of motivation, for example, one of the categories of experiences can be factors that, according to student teachers, demotivate pupils in school, such as abstract theoretical subject matter, having to listen very long, seeing no connection between the school subject and everyday life, or getting low marks. The trainer might introduce then the terms extrinsic and intrinsic motivation to structure this list further. The input from theory in this phase has the form of labelling or classification according to theoretical notions

and is therefore rather an input of theoretical elements than of complete theories. Relations between theoretical elements are usually not introduced in this phase. Student teachers do not perceive this kind of input as theoretical, because it is so obviously related to their experiences.

Focusing

After (usually a wealth of) experiences have been structured it is possible to focus on some parts of these and analyze them in greater detail. It can be possible to focus on many different things such as commonly perceived learning needs of the student teachers, essential aspects or generic features of a concept or competency, student teachers' gestalts, the relation of these gestalts to the classroom reality, student teachers' strengths and weaknesses in relation to a particular competency, what they have learned and what their learning aims are for the future. Beforehand the staff can choose features that they think are important or student teachers can be invited to bring up elements to focus on. If for example the theme is motivation, the staff may decide that they want to be certain to have the possibility to connect the student teachers' experiences with Maslow's needs' hierarchy and therefore they focus on pupils' needs observed by the student teachers in the interview reports. In this phase theoretical notions may become more clearly visible for the student teachers because the trainer will not only label experiences or things student teachers have said on a more abstract level but also will point to theoretical interpretations, connections between different categories and causal relationships.
The form of theory in this phase is still not as it is usually found in books (with for example emphasis on descriptions of theoretical constructs and conceptual networks or research reports), because the descriptions are still directly connected to the student teachers' experiences or future plans.

Introduction of theories

In this last phase the teacher educator may introduce theories from the literature in a more traditional form such as a chapter on motivation in a book on educational psychology. Now, relationships between theoretical concepts are presented. The introduction can for example be in the form of a lecture or a written presentation. If a standard text is used then it will usually be necessary to make explicit what the connection is between the theory and the experiences of the student teachers.

If the theory is in conflict with the student teachers' preconceptions, it can be necessary to start a longer and more elaborated procedure in which first the status of ideas that student teachers have upon entering the programme element are lowered in order to allow student teachers to be motivated to learn about alternative theories (Korthagen, 1992).

6. Overview of the curriculum organisation

The study load of the one-year programme involves 1680 hours and encloses at least 840 hours school connected activities and about 840 hours activities on campus. The school hours have to include 250 hours in classroom from which a minimum of 120 have to be taught by the student teacher. They spend 300 hours of the 1680 to activities of research nature, divided over campus and school connected hours. The practical component of the programme includes two phases, the triad teaching practice period and the individual and independent final teaching period (Figure 1).

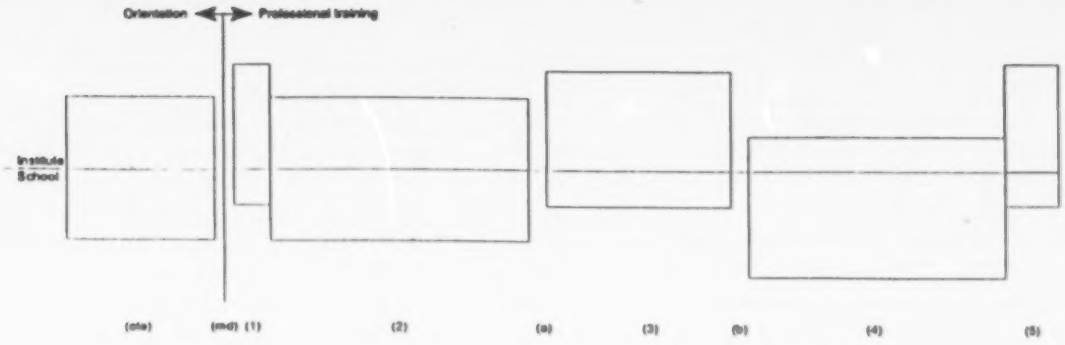

Figure 1: Diagram of the one year postgraduate teacher education programme of IVLOS Institute of Education, Utrecht University. Above the horizontal line activities on campus, below activities in school. The programme starts two times a year: in August and in January. The diagram concerns the course starting in January.
(ote) Orientation on teacher education, 8 weeks. (md) Master's degree. (1) Introduction, 2 weeks. (2) Triad teaching practice period, 14 weeks. (3) Reorientation period, 10 weeks. (4) Individual and independent final teaching period, 14 weeks. (5) Concluding phase of the programme, 3 weeks. (a) Time off, 1 week. (b) Vacation, 6 weeks.

The programme is structured primarily as an alternation in blocks of one or more weeks at campus and in schools. However, during the school periods there are also some activities at the university to optimize the integration between theory and practice. University activities to prepare for student teaching include some basic theoretical notions necessary to pre-structure students experiences, practising of teaching and reflection skills in reduced simulated teaching and supervision situations, and some organizational matters. The new experiences in schools are points of departure for learning in the next period on campus. On campus the university staff tries to connect theoretical notions as much as possible to field experiences and learning questions of the student teachers. Reflection on field experiences and deepening insights mostly includes: exchange and analysis of experiences, formulating learning questions, exercise situations and new subjects (intended for structuring experiences and focusing on some parts of student teaching for analysis in greater detail and introducing relevant supportive theory) and individual private study.

Introduction - 2 weeks
This preparatory phase is fairly short, because, in their undergraduate studies, the students have already received a two-months orientation on the teaching profession including a student teaching component of 4 weeks. Some of the elements included in the introductory period programme are: a training in observation and discussion skills and other social and communicative skills that are important for proceeding through the curriculum successfully; practice in reduced teaching situations like simulation lessons and role playing; theoretical preparation for teacher actions; visiting schools and continued orientation on the practice of teaching (school period-1, 3 days).

Triad teaching practice period - 14 weeks
The triad student teaching period is a relatively protected teaching period, during which three students work together as a group, under close supervision of a cooperating teacher and a university supervisor. At the end of this teaching period the student teacher is evaluated to determine his or her suitability for admission to the independent individual student teaching period. The triad teaching practice includes two school periods. In school period-2 (2½ weeks) student teachers teach (parts of) lessons and carry out assignments based on campus work. They gradually work up their way to series of lessons. In school period-3 (5 weeks) student teachers teach individual lessons and series of lessons and they may teach all the weekly lessons of one group students in his or her subject for a few weeks.

The activities on campus between the school periods are intended for exchange and analysis of field experiences. Topics that usually are discussed include aspects of teaching methods, learning psychology, developmental psychology, foundations of education, motivation and counselling. Also reflection is started about the teacher's role in the department and school organization, the role in the profession, and legal matters.

Supervision conferences in the triad teaching practice usually follow the ALACT model (Korthagen, 1985; see section 3). This inductive approach starts from student teachers' experiences and conceptions rather than from theories on learning and teaching from the literature. The university supervisor visits in this practice period every triad about five times for a day to observe lessons and to participate in supervision conferences. A frequent and intensive communication between university staff and cooperating teacher is of utmost importance for good guidance of the student teachers. Therefore meeting are organized at the university between cooperating teachers and the university staff to discuss in collegial support groups the progress and problems of their student teachers, the best ways to supervise them and the content of the campus activities.

Reorientation - 10 weeks
The triad student teaching period is followed by a reorientation period, intended for reflection and the deepening of insights. Reflection on the first school experiences is central to this phase. What educational route has been followed up till now? What does this mean for the rest of the programme? For example, in this phase the student teacher can try to gain insight into the current state of affairs in his or her learning process by writing a paper about his or her experiences so far. The supervisor offers special tutorials and personal coaching to stimulate the student teachers to deepen their insights.

As a follow-up to the practice experience, the prospective teachers study things further, again supervised by the institute supervisor. They study the 'theory' behind a number of issues by private study, research-related activities and workshops. One standard part of the programme is designing and carrying out one major practice oriented research project. This inquiry is concluded by a report and a presentation to fellow student teachers and supervisors. Some students go abroad for this project to compare Dutch education with education in other countries.

Individual and independent final teaching period - 14 weeks
The independent final teaching period (IFTP) is a continuous three month student teaching period, which takes place in the last part of the one year postgraduate teacher training programme in an other school than the triad student teaching period. The student teacher, who is presented to the pupils as a qualified teacher, functions as a regular teacher, under normal constraints and pressures, teaching all lessons in a particular subject in a number of classes. The number of classes is chosen so that all together 10-12 hours a week are taught, a 40 per cent weekly teaching load. The ultimate responsibility still lies with the school supervisor. In addition to preparing and giving lessons, the student teacher also takes part in activities in the department and elsewhere within the school. In this period the student teachers should gradually acquire complete starting competence but they have to accept full responsibility for the classes they teach from the outset.

In the IFTP the student teacher is supervised by means of 'long-arm' supervision, in the sense that cooperating teacher and university supervisor do not actually attend the student teachers lessons. The cooperating teacher is responsible for supervising the quality of the work (the so called work supervision or progress sessions), while the university supervisor monitors the process of professional development (the so called general supervision) (Koetsier, Wubbels & Van Driel, 1992). The university supervisory conferences - usually in small groups - focus on the development of student teachers' own teaching styles and their individual personal views on teaching and a reflective professional attitude. Moreover student teachers meet on a weekly basis

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with their cohort group usually at night to share experiences, problems, ideas and resources.

Concluding phase of the programme - 3 weeks
This period is concerned with reports on and assessment of the programme results. The conclusion includes a final report, final evaluations, final discussions and lastly an assessment of the student teachers' competence.

7. Research on the student teaching component

In 1991 a quantitative evaluation study among all graduates from the IVLOS teacher education programme between 1987 and 1991 showed that 86 per cent of the respondents considered their preparation programme as relevant or highly relevant for their present work as a teacher.

Hermans, Créton & Korthagen (1993) present qualitative data of an experiment with a group of 12 student teachers in which the teacher educators strictly worked according to the five phase structure described in section 5. The student teachers reported to experience a seamless connection between theory and practice, a noteworthy result, given the many research reports from all over the world showing the problematic relationship between theory and practice. Some quotes from the student teachers' evaluations are: "The integration theory/practice to my mind was perfect"; "Come to think of it, I have seen and/or used all of the theory in practice"; "The things dealt with in the course are always apparent in school practice".

Vedder & Bannink (1988) evaluated the one-to-one lessons in the beginning of the programme (section 4). The one-to-one represents a reduction of the complexity of the teaching practice: the number of pupils is limited to one. The one-to-one lesson is a situation which will present itself in daily practice when a teacher helps an individual pupil. Vedder & Bannink conclude that learning experiences gained by student teachers in the one-to-one lessons offer them a good orientation toward the teaching profession. The one-to-one scheme enables student teachers to gain experience in reflection.

Brouwer (1989) did a longitudinal study on the development of teaching competencies during university teacher training programmes that only included a triad student teaching period, and during the first year as a teacher. He states that student teachers who had done their teacher training programme with a triad period displayed a considerable capacity for self-evaluation and self-monitoring (essential conditions for the 'growth competence'). This conclusion, combined with the data from the study of Koetsier (1991) about the IFTP (see below), justifies the hypothesis that having followed a programme that includes a triad period, the majority of student teachers are sufficiently competent for both functioning and continued growth during the IFTP.

The IFTP is an element introduced in 1987 in our one year postgraduate teacher training programme. Before implementing it in the programme Koetsier (1991) piloted this new student teaching element in a developmental research project. An important outcome of the IFTP study was that all participants conclude that the IFTP is a very realistic student teaching period - that closely resembles the work situation of a beginning teacher - during which the student teacher is obliged to work independently, while under considerable pressure. The student teacher is confronted with the problems normally faced by beginning teachers. The schools adopted a positive attitude towards the IFTP. The respondents unanimously agreed that an IFTP should display certain characteristic aspects if it is to be worthwhile. The most important being: The use of a procedure for the admission of a student teacher to the IFTP and the school. Having the IFTP take place at the beginning of the school year in a different school than the triad student teaching period
The IFTP should extend over one report period and the student teacher should be introduced to

the class as a qualified teacher. A realistic work load must be created: 10-12 lessons a week, plus all the normal duties of a teacher. Finally, supervision of the student teacher should take place without attending lessons.

On the base of the IFTP study we summarize in table 1 some actual short-term learning outcomes shared perceived by the participating student teachers, cooperating teachers and university staff.

Table 1: Learning outcomes of student teachers in the IFTP

- Mid-term planning and organizing lesson sequences that are in line with decisions made by the department
- Overseeing several classroom situations at the same time while making sure that the teaching/learning process is kept going
- Planning the investment of time for, preparation, department and school activities, and leisure activities
- Handling of work pressure and social pressure
- Creating a relation based on mutual trust with several classes or individual pupils
- Starting up a learning process in several classes, and maintaining the momentum of that process
- Differentiating within class groups, recognizing the particular traits or problems of individual pupils
- Functioning independently as a teacher, in the class and in the school; this includes such things as taking the initiative, making decisions, and having to take a stand with regard to pupils, the cooperating teacher and the department
- Cooperating with teachers inside and outside the department
- Functioning within an actual school context, for instance, by taking account of specific aspects of school organisation and school policy, the various officials and their responsibilities within the school, and implicit and explicit opinions and loyalties within the school culture
- Gaining more insight into the complexity of the teaching profession
- Gaining more insight into, and experience of, the daily practice of teaching, including such things as improvising and functioning under less than ideal circumstances
- Answering for one's own actions as a teacher with respect to third parties, as during meetings of the department, report meetings and parents' evenings
- Developing strategies for analyzing and solving problems

8. Discussion of the school university partnership

A key factor for success in an experiential approach to student teaching is the relation between the student teaching school and the university. In this section we summarise what we have learned about that partnership from our experiences.

First, that relation should be based on *equivalence*. That doesn't mean that both partners do not have specific input in the process and have specific responsibilities. In fact they have and this is laid down in the formal contracts. Both participants have however an equal say in the planning, the content and the organisation of the program. In practice the university tends to have a greater influence on the theoretical framework and initiatives about improvement of the programme than the schools, because of the many other duties the cooperating teachers have. We have taken one special measure to give the cooperating teachers power in the relationship: in the assessment of student teachers the university supervisor and the cooperating teacher have an equal say, but if there is disagreement the final decision is with the cooperating teacher. Of course the university staff and the cooperating teachers have different roles and we even try and give them differentiated responsibilities in the actual supervision of student teaching as described for the IFTP (section 6).

Second, the *school context* is important for the success of the programme. In the choice of student teaching schools alignment of the climate with the aims of the university, the room in the school for experimenting, and the quality of internal communication are important considerations. Issues involved are the willingness of the school to adapt to the needs of individual student teachers, to let them participate in out of class activities, pupil counselling activities and school meetings and

to allow them to observe classes of different teachers or all the lessons of a group of pupils on one day. In the school the choice of classes that the student teachers are going to teach is important. They are chosen in such a way as to ensure that there is a good balance between safety and challenge: classes easily can be too difficult so that only survival is an issue or be to easy so that student teachers are not stimulated to learn. The cooperating teachers need to have release time for the supervision and they must be willing to participate in training of supervision skills.

Third, the *quality of the supervision* in the school is of utmost importance to get a close connection between theory and practice. Cooperating teachers need to be able to signify the relevance of theoretical notions for the student teachers whenever this applies. Also they must be able to refer the student teachers to campus activities. Therefore cooperating teachers are selected on the basis of their interest and competence in supervision. In addition IVLOS organizes two courses for supervisors. Members of the university and school staff attend these courses together. The first course focuses on the development of basic supervision skills and the promotion of reflection. The second course is intended for cooperating teachers and university supervisors with at least two years experience in supervising student teaching (see for more details about these courses: Koster et al., 1996). This follow up training gives a more in-depth knowledge and competence in promoting reflection and in introducing the participants to a systems approach to analyze classroom interaction (cf. Watzlawick, Beavin & Jackson, 1967; Wubbels, Créton & Holvast, 1988; Wubbels & Levy, 1993). The systems approach is an attempt to understand the functioning of a communication system on the basis of a circular exchange of information between individuals in open systems. In the educational context, for example, the conduct of the teacher is not seen as an individual phenomenon, but rather as a product of the permanent, simultaneous interaction between the members of the open-system class.

Fourth, *communication between the school and the university* should be open and frequent. Therefore in our programme university staff visits schools frequently in the triad teaching period not only to observe and discuss student teachers' lessons, but also to discuss the programme with the cooperating teachers. Cooperating teachers on their turn come to the university on a regular basis to share experiences with each other and the university staff and to evaluate the programme and plan new elements. Cooperating teachers and university staff may participate in the same professional development activities.

Finally, perhaps one of the most important factors is that both teachers and university staff feel that *the partnership enriches their professional life and the quality of their teaching.* Practical considerations easily come into the university and the teachers feel that supervising student teachers influences positively their own teaching.

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